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# National Lottery support for oral history project



Dr Maya Parmar, director of Hadithi CIC

**By Siobhan Middleton**  
newsdesk@iliffmedia.co.uk

An oral history project that will help preserve the stories of people of South Asian heritage has received support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Hauxton-based social enterprise Hadithi CIC is behind the scheme, in which people aged 16 to 25 will have three days of oral history training before recording interviews with family members and friends over 55 years of age.

The project coincides with the 50th anniversary of the South Asian expulsion from Uganda by dictator Idi Amin and the 75th anniversary of Indian partition and independence.

Dr Maya Parmar, director of Hadithi CIC, has a PhD in postcolonial, cultural and diaspora studies as well as a personal attachment to the legacy of migration. She was born in the UK to parents of Indian heritage who had migrated from Kenya.

Maya said: "We're extremely excited to receive this support, thanks to National Lottery players.

"As a result of my own family history, I've always been really interested in how you can belong in a place having experienced uprooting within your family heritage.

"I've noticed that those who have undergone this uprooting often don't discuss it. My parents didn't talk a lot about their migration, and this seems to be quite a common theme within many families. I think this is due to the pain surrounding these experiences, although talking about them can be quite cathartic.

"One of the real values in the oral history

project is that we're collecting memories which are at risk of being lost as people pass on.

"Another important outcome should be the creation of intergenerational connections, as younger and older people within a family have conversations. After the isolation of Covid-19, we hope this will help to promote well-being.

"We're partnered with Cambridgeshire Archives for this project; excitingly, they will ensure that every oral history we collect is digitised and permanently stored."

This digitised content will comprise recorded interviews alongside textual summaries, a 'family album' including photos and quotes gained by the participants, and a short film about the project.

Rib Davies, whose work in oral histories since the late 1970s has included training for the British Library, will spend three days teaching the participants.

He said: "The group will learn about why we do oral history, memory and the influence of hindsight on memory, how to use digital recording equipment effectively, and the legal and ethical issues that arise from oral history.

"We will also spend a lot of time discussing interview techniques and how an interview for oral history differs from others, such as job or journalistic interviews. It is a different animal.

"By focussing on the day-to-day fabric of ordinary people, oral history gives a voice to people who are generally left out of the historical record. From the limited amount I know about South Asian history, it seems to be relatively neglected as a subject.

"Oral history can also help cement a feeling of community for a group of people, and I think this will be an outcome for the participants of this project."

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